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ST. PATRICK'S
HOSPITAL

Providence Broadway
Internal Medicine

A member of PROVIDENCE Health & Services

EXHIBIT 25
DATE 1/26/2011
HB 227

January 26, 2011

Re: House Bill 227

To Members of the Montana Legislature:

I am an infectious disease physician in Missoula. I write to you regarding my concern about HB 227. This bill exposes the children of Montana to unnecessary risk.

This bill would allow children to attend any daycare facility without receiving standard childhood immunizations. Montana, as the rest of the U.S., has been experiencing an outbreak of pertussis for the last several years. This illness is most severe in very young children as witnessed by the deaths of 10 infants due to pertussis in California in 2010. This age group is also at the highest risk of infection as the vaccine requires several doses to be most effective and the first dose is not even given until the infant is at least 2 months old. At its best, the vaccine provides incomplete protection. A significant proportion of the children attending daycare are in this high risk age range where they have incomplete protection from the vaccine and a high risk of severe disease.

In 2010, Missoula County had 25 cases of pertussis. 14 of these cases were in children. 3 cases were in infants, one of whom became critically ill and spent 1 week in the intensive care unit fighting pertussis. Our largest cluster was in 2 licensed child care facilities and involved 110 infants and children, 24 high school students who spent time there for a practicum experience, and 30 staff persons. All who were exposed received letters with instructions to contact their health care provider for evaluation for prophylaxis. Another cluster was driven by a family that declined vaccination for religious reasons. This cluster resulted in the exposure of several individuals at church who were instructed to notify their health care provider for evaluation and prophylaxis.

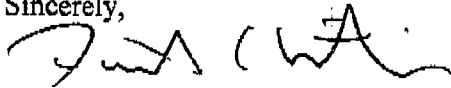
The primary concern is the risk of serious illness in these children. There are also other concerns. Each person exposed to pertussis must take prophylactic antibiotics even if they have been vaccinated. Because of these exposures a total of 236 individuals were exposed to pertussis that we know of in Missoula County. Parents experienced unnecessary anxiety regarding the health of their children and large amounts of resources (dollars and time) were spent insuring all of these individuals received appropriate evaluation and treatment.

In public policy, there is always a balance between individual rights and community good. I do not debate the right of parents to decline vaccinations for their children. However, children also have the right to be safe when they attend daycare. Parents of young children should be able to send their children to state-regulated daycare knowing that the environment will be as safe as possible. The state should not allow unvaccinated

children to attend state-regulated daycare. Parents choosing not to vaccinate their children can send them to private daycare not regulated by the state.

In the interest of the safety of Montana's children, I urge you to not vote for HB 227.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Christiansen". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "D" and a cursive "Christiansen".

David Christiansen M.D.